

April 2008

County of Los Angeles
Department of Parks and Recreation



THE GREEN SCENE

“Take a Break” then “Take a Hike”

These days, more Americans are working more and playing less. The personal costs associated with this include cutting back on sleep and time with their families. A recent survey found that almost a third of people working more than 48 hours a week said that exhaustion was affecting married life. They also complained that long hours and overwork led to arguments and tensions at home.

These reasons and more are why you should take a break and take a hike. The Department's *Play for Life!* campaign highlights something you can do every month to stay active, get healthy and improve your quality of life.

April was *Take a Hike!* month, and any one of the Department's natural trails at Kenneth Hahn Park, Placerita Canyon Nature Center, Eaton Canyon Natural Area Park & Nature Center, Schabarum Regional Park, Whittier Narrows Recreation Area would provide you an experience and a beautiful place for exercising, relaxing, meditating and spending time with friends and loved ones.

You have 52 hiking and equestrian trails through all five Supervisorial Districts to choose from. The Department of Parks and Recreation also offers more than 90 parks that offer recreational and instructional swimming, golfing and cooking classes, concerts and more!

Because of the nature of our department, we know that playing is not only fun but beneficial for your health, so be sure to work hard, then play hard as well!

To find a hiking or equestrian trail in your neighborhood, go to www.lacountyparks.org for more information.



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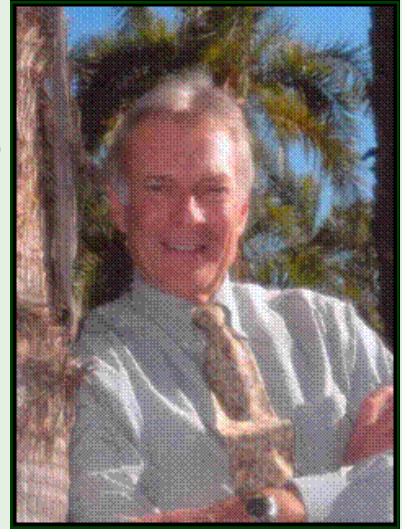
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Greetings from the Director

Earlier this month you received an email about our *Play for Life!* campaign. I encouraged everyone to proudly wear their *Take a Hike!* buttons and get out to our facilities and *Take a Hike!* Now that the month is coming to a close, I hope that you had an opportunity to experience one of our department's 52 hiking and equestrian trails, shared the information with the public and had a lot of fun along the way.

There are few things like hiking to get you healthy and out in nature all at once. And living in Los Angeles County and the mild weather allows us to hike not just in April, but all year long. So I hope you take advantage of our location and our facilities to continue taking hikes in the following months and make it a part of your recreational lifestyle.

With May's arrival and the weather warming up even more, the Department's *Play for Life!* campaign is shifting focus to our community swimming pools. Be on the lookout for your blue *Make a Splash!* buttons and wear them proudly. The department's 28 public pools are a great way to stay cool and *Make a Splash!*



Russ Guiney, Director

Renaissance Faire 2008

This year's Renaissance Faire opened at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, 15501 E. Arrow Highway in Irwindale, on Saturday, April 5, 2008. Supervisor Gloria Molina, Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney and other local dignitaries attended the opening celebration to help usher in the Renaissance Faire's newly signed five-year contract with the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area.

The Renaissance Faire will be open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays through May 18, 2008 from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Children under age 5 are admitted free. For adult admission information, visit

www.renfair.com



A Sampling of the Hikes that Await You at the Department of Parks and Recreation

Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area

offers between 20 and 30 different manmade foot paths.

Begin your hike at the main administration office at the park. Along your hike, discover many beautiful native plants, including the Laurel Sumac, Toyon, cactus and Our Lords Candle (a type of Yucca plant). Don't be surprised if you come across wildlife such as rattlesnakes, horned lizards, coyotes and bobcats. Look up and you may see birds of prey such as the Coopers Hawk, Red Tail Hawk, Osprey Hawk, along with owls, ducks and geese. With 836 acres of park land and natural area, Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area will keep you busy and intrigued!



At Vasquez Rocks Natural Area/ Nature Center, you can witness some of the most spectacular rock formations and say you've stepped foot on the historic Pacific Crest Trail in one visit! The Vasquez Rocks actually run off from ancient San Gabriel Mountains and uplifted from earthquake activity. The main peak tilts at a 45 degree angle. This is due to 25-27 million years of earthquake activity. Start your hike at the main office, which also has a map with the park's three main trails: the Pacific

Crest Trail, the History Trail and the Geology Trail. This part of the Pacific Crest Trail is just a portion of the 2,700 mile-long trail that runs from Mexico to Canada. For an easier hike, the

History Trail will take you less than half-a-mile, with numbered stops. It shows the detailed remnants of the Tataviam settlement of 4,000 years ago. Another easy hike is the Geology Trail, half-a-mile long with explanations on the "making of a rock", why plants grow out of rocks and how rocks are displaced due to earthquakes.

A few notes about the 945 acres of parkland at Vasquez Rocks: after the spring rain, wildflowers such as goldfields, golden bush, fillerie, a few poppies, beavertail cactus, and yucca color the landscape. Year round, you can expect to see plants such as the California Juniper, chaparral are chemise, buckwheat and scrub oak. You can also witness squirrels, coyote, jack rabbits, lizards, bobcats, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, king snakes, and gophers.

Singing His Way To The Top



Chances are, you've heard him singing the National Anthem at dozens of Department and Countywide events, but few of us realize just how much singing General Maintenance Supervisor Michael Young really does in his spare time.

Michael has been a County employee since 1983, but has been a professional performer for City Connection Entertainment for more than 20 years. Currently Michael is the lead singer in three popular Southern California Variety and Gospel Groups, *Triple Threat*, *Sharky & the Babes* (Michael is

Sharky) and *God's Living Miracle*. Triple Threat is a trio performing 50's, 60's, and contemporary, Motown, Gospel & Doo-wop music. They also stroll, crooning as they go, similar to the band's appearance during the 2007 South Agency's Annual Holiday Lunch. *Sharky & the Babes* are noted as one of the most requested bands in special event planning. Currently Michael is recording a gospel album with his group, God's Living Miracle which is expected to be released later this year.

"I started singing at the early age of four. I used to enjoy performing James Brown songs and moves for my family," says Michael. "Since a young age I've been in numerous gospel choirs and in high school I song in the Washington Preparatory Choir where I went to Hawaii and performed in a National Competition and won a bronze medal. However, singing gospel is my favorite and I enjoy singing at special occasions. I always tell people to put God first and everything else will follow."

Michael and his group are top industry professionals that have performed for major social & corporate events such as The Jennifer Diamond Foundation (Niece to Neil Diamond), Wachovia, Scan Health, Herbalife, Los Angeles Consumer Attorney's Association and private events for celebrities such as Smokey Robinson, Barry Gordy, Phil Donahue and Michael Douglas.

Michael's version of the National Anthem has received such a reputation that he has performed it for the Los Angeles Clippers, Dodgers Baseball, Jesse Jackson, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, L.A. County Supervisors and the Long Beach Jazz Festival, to name just a few. His harmonic voice ranges from first tenor to bass and has been heard in movies such as "Friday" with Ice Cube, "Breaking' the Rules" with Jason Bateman and Annie Potts and Disney's "Jump In". Michael also enjoys fishing, cooking and traveling.

If you'd like to see Michael perform live, visit www.cityconnectionent.com and search under variety groups for Sharky and the Babes.



Fishing for More than Bragging Rights at Apollo Lake Fishing Derby



Bright and early on a spring Saturday, 697 avid fishermen and some first-time anglers entered Apollo Park's Spring Classic Adult Fishing Derby to vie for the biggest trout and hundreds of dollars in prize money. Another 400 family members and friends braved the morning chill to cheer them on.

Cash prizes were awarded for first through 10th place. The heaviest trout caught weighed in at more than 7 pounds and netted the winning fisherman more than \$1700.



This exciting event is one of three annual fishing derbies held at beautiful Apollo Park with its 26 acres of recreational lakes. In addition to the spring adult fishing derby, another derby for adults takes place in November and a children and youth derby takes place in May solely for children and youth. Look out for these events for an opportunity for the whole family to fish for fun and prizes!

Aquatic Adventure Camp Expansion Due to Overwhelming Popularity

Lori Bennett thought she could breathe new life into an old concept, and she was right. Adventure camps are not a new concept, but the supervisor of the Castaic Lake Regional Park came up with a whole new approach, resulting in a new version of the Aquatic Adventure Camp. She enlisted the cooperation of the North Agency, Placerita Canyon Nature Center and California State University Northridge (CSUN) and together, they created a 10-day youth camp that was so successful, there are four more planned for this summer.



Open to all interested youth who had reached Level 5 Proficiency in County swim tests, last fall's Aquatic Adventure Camp began with swimming, snorkeling and kayaking lessons at four North Agency pools for 8 days.

The last two days of the camp were held at Castaic Lake where the youth and their families were greeted by a cadre of North Agency and Lake Lifeguards and staff. They were introduced to overnight camping, an experience most, if not all, might never have otherwise experienced. In addition to open water swimming and a dinner prepared by camp staff, they were treated to a live wild animal presentation by Recreation Services Supervisor Frank Hoffman of Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

Following a rattlesnake, an owl and various other interesting critters is not an easy gig, but the movie "Elf" managed to entertain the tired campers and inspire an impromptu Christmas Carol sing-along.



The next day, CSUN took over with Professor John van Arsdale providing one-on-one instruction in kayaking, sailing and water safety, along with lessons in water conservation and ecology. In addition to improved skills in water activities and water safety, the 49 campers and their families took away a heightened appreciation of their natural surroundings and the area wildlife, along with a new-found pride in what they can accomplish and enjoy as a family.

Youth are encouraged to participate in the Aquatic Adventure Camps planned for summer 2008. For more information contact Tina Nuss at (661) 257-4050.

Carolyn Rosas Fitness Center Celebrates Grand Opening



More than 150 people joined the Department of Parks and Recreation South Agency, Supervisor Don Knabe, Director Russ Guiney, the Rowland Heights community and other special guests to celebrate a festive grand opening of the newly-constructed Carolyn Rosas Park Fitness Center last month. The offices of Assemblyman Bob Huff, Senator Bob Margett and Senator Gloria Romero all

presented Director Guiney with congratulatory scrolls.

The 2,500 square foot community fitness building was eagerly anticipated by the community after more than a year of planning and construction. Mt. San Antonio College, Rowland Unified School District, Sheriff's Youth Athletic League, and the Church of the Nazarenes provided informational booths for the event. Guests were offered a tour the facility and enjoyed live entertainment and demonstrations by the youth wrestling class, hula dancing class and Tai Chi participants. Refreshments, cake and cotton candy added to the celebration!

This new facility provides various interior and exterior areas which can be used to support a variety of park programming including wrestling, Tai Chi, exercise classes, Hula Dancing and Badminton. Carolyn Rosas Park also offers a host of programs for both youth and adults, and with the new fitness center, programming is expected to nearly double from 14 to 22. A computer club, after school program, day camp, junior golf, soccer, summer lunch, teen club, tiny tots, flag football and summer day camp are just a sample of the programming available at the park. Carolyn Rosas Park also has a basketball court, children's play area, community activity building, computer room, multipurpose field and picnic areas.

HIGH FIVE!

For Those Who Go Above and Beyond...

Thank you for sending **Al Evans** our way. He is such a gift... we actually refer to him as our "Community jewel".

There has been an incredible attitude change in the way this community sees its 2 parks. The difference is Al Evans and the "can do" attitude he has brought to our parks. From the current after school programs in place to the list of summer activities and programs he has scheduled for both our parks, Al has literally changed the way we now view Crescenta Valley and Two Strike Parks. No request or suggestion is ever discounted by Al. He is always open to our suggestions and ideas and not once have I ever heard him say "we can't do that". It's always "well, let me see what I can do" or most times it's "sure, we can do that for you". It is so refreshing to work with Al. I can't begin to describe how much he means to this community.

Thank you **Kathleen Ritner** for giving us Al and for your commitment to excellence at our two parks. We truly appreciate what you and Al do for us.

-Steve Pierce
Crescenta Valley Town Council

I just wanted to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to the County of Los Angeles Dept. of Parks and Recreation for their hosting of the **LA County Junior Golf Program** recently held in La Mirada. My 2 kids have participated in this event for 3 years straight and they love it, and as a result they have become more interested in the sport of golf. My 8 year old is already starting to ask for his own set of clubs!!

Besides sparking additional interest in the sport itself, your program helps teach and develop other valuable skills such as respect and honesty, as well as the development of interpersonal skills. The staff was very knowledgeable, friendly, and made it fun for the kids. There was a lot of emphasis on cheering and positive re-enforcement during the award presentation, and it was nice to see each kid get something.

Your program truly is fantastic and I hope it continues for years to come. Thanks again for such a wonderful event.

-Greg Futato
Parent / La Mirada

I wanted to thank you for supporting the **L.A. County Junior Golf Program**. My 5 and 6 year olds recently had the opportunity to participate in a program at Los Verdes Golf Course that was arranged through our home school academy, South Bay Faith. I was impressed that the coaches emphasized sportsmanship, character, and respect in equal part to offering quality instruction on how to "play the game". Thank you for supporting a program that has made a difference to our family and to our greater Los Angeles Community.

-Daniel and Kalani Mark
Parents / Rancho Palos Verdes

GIVE Someone a HIGH FIVE!

Do you know someone in our department who deserves special recognition? Maybe you were on a tight deadline and that person helped you meet it. Maybe you were having a tough work day and that person helped you beat it. You know who those people are, the ones who go above and beyond. Help us recognize them. Email their name and a short paragraph of why they deserve a High Five! to iperius@parks.lacounty.gov and we'll do our best to include them in the High Five! column of The Green Scene.



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